

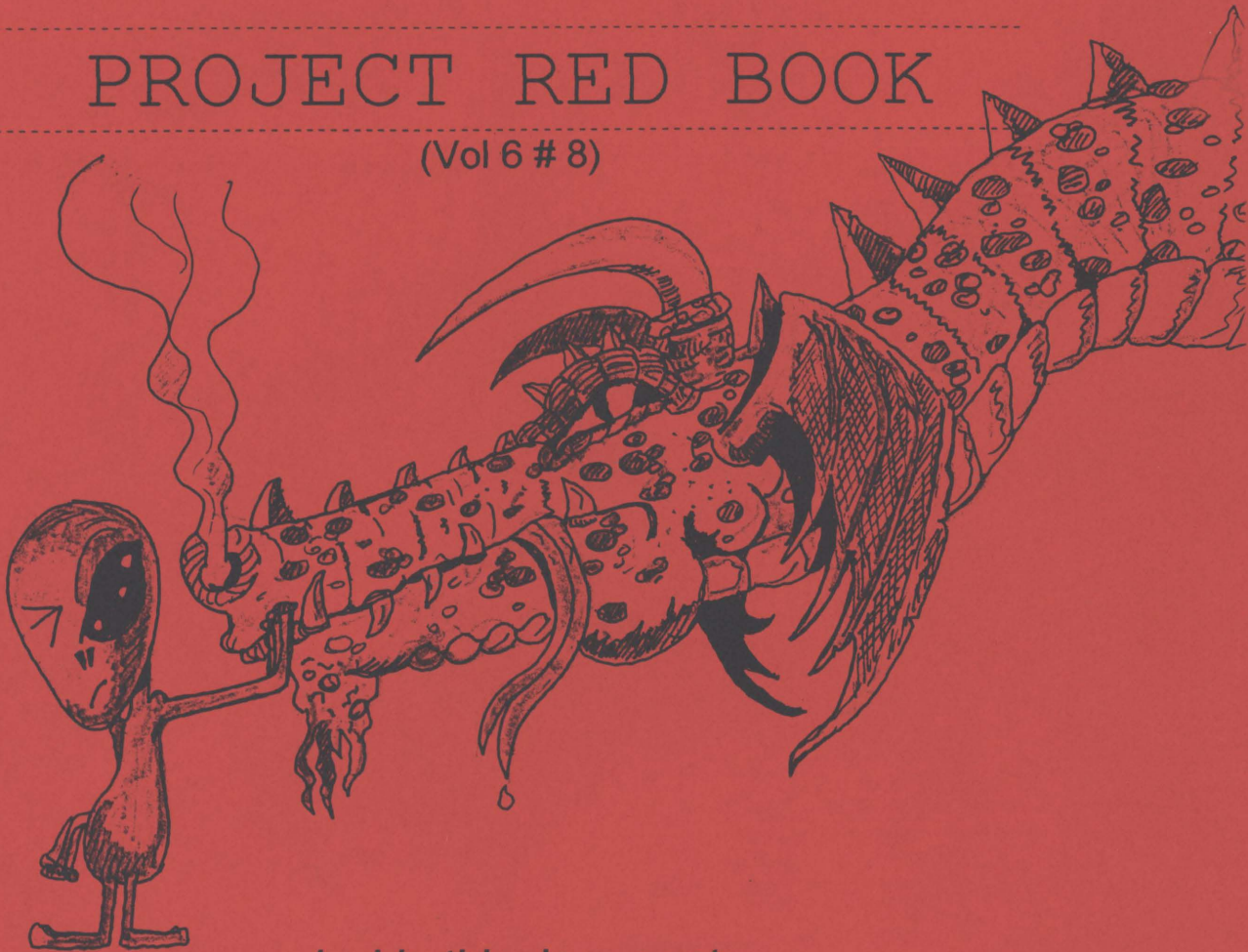
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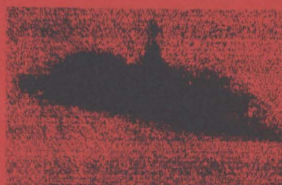
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"Game over,man...game over!"

# A VIEW FROM BRITAIN

## THE JENNY RANGLES COLUMN

(Originally published in The MUFON JOURNAL, February 2002)

*(Editor's note - Please bear in mind the original date of publication. YUFOS extends its thanks to Jenny & to Dwight Connely, editor of The MUFON Journal, for permission to reproduce this work.)*

### LEGITIMATE UFOS

As we all know UFOlogy struggles to gain scientific recognition amongst the majority of working researchers in areas such as physics. In a recent column I set out some of the problems we face in bridging that gap.

Perhaps our theories are just too outside the scientific mainstream for some people to accept. Others, so they tell me, will listen to any strong evidence - which usually eliminates most sightings where the data is anecdotal. Often single witnesses offering merely anecdotal evidence, in fact.

Scientists have a paranoia about only believing in things that can be easily reproduced in their labs. Inevitably, of course, that means UFOs are not high on the shopping list of most scientists looking for a research project. Yet, almost paradoxically, there is a type of UFO (for this is precisely what it is by any reasonable definition) that scientists are investing lab time into studying and devoting conference research facilities towards seeking to understand. This is ball lightning.

Why should such a contentious phenomenon (which some scientists still disbelieve is even real) be acceptable whereas other UFOs very often are not? What makes ball lightning a legitimate UFO amenable to scientific scrutiny?

#### BL or UFO?

It is worth recounting an incident with which I had first had involvement. This really got me interested in the whole area because it took place at my house in August 1977. I was not a witness, being away for the weekend with my boyfriend at the time, but my mother was and so were, several neighbours - all of whom I interviewed on my return.

What had occurred was that my mother was talking in the garden to the woman who lived next door to us. Our bungalows in Irlam,

Lancashire, were on the edge of a large expanse of farmland and peat bog known as Chat Moss. As they talked they heard a strange humming/buzzing noise, followed several seconds later by a large bang like a gun going off.

That might have been it but for the fortune that the neighbour's daughter had been located further away from the house in the garden and had been able to see over the rooftops. Here she witnessed the object causing the noises.

It was a yellowish oval shape that glowed as it hovered above the rooftops and then vanished in a large flash like a camera taking a picture, coincident with the explosion.

The weather at the time was dull but there was no trace of any thunderstorm. As such this case immediately seemed to be a classic UFO sighting - although it did contain various clues that suggested the possibility of clear weather ball lightning (which is not as uncommon as most people expect).

From hundreds of collected reports ball lightning is known to be a short lived phenomenon and it often vanishes explosively as alleged here. Another fascinating clue that emerged during my investigation was that there had been a sudden large downpour over Irlam that afternoon. The only place where no rain had seemed to fall, so far as I could ascertain, was the land above which this small oval mass had hovered. Again there are known cases where the ionization apparently associated with ball lightning has caused localised clouds to separate (basically ionized water droplets are repelled apart) leaving a small 'hole' in cloud cover. This has been reported as lasting for up to an hour in some cases.

For these reasons I was fairly certain that this was a fascinating example of a UAP (unidentified atmospheric phenomenon) at



least akin to ball lightning. But I reckoned without the testimony of several young men who had been situated on Chat Moss about 100 yards further from these two bungalows. They claimed to see the object rushing across the sky towards the witnesses in the gardens and that it was without doubt some kind of craft. They could not be shaken from their assurance that it was an alien spaceship. Either way, what they saw was rather different from what the other three witnesses say they did from closer range.

As such we do have a UFO sighting here that was seen in at least two different ways and that, in my opinion, probably was some form of ball lightning (BL as it is often termed). This established to my satisfaction that the two phenomena are directly related and posed many questions about the matter - not least why such a modest atmospheric phenomenon could cause some witnesses to see it in a more exotic fashion.

### Science and BL

Science has studied reports of BL for centuries. It appeared several times, for example, during the dangerous 'lightning attracting' experiments conducted by scientists such as Benjamin Franklin. Indeed shortly after Franklin had succeeded to 'tame' a storm using a kite a Russian scientist was electrocuted when what seems to have been BL emerged from his equipment, flew across the room and struck his head.

However, despite eyewitness accounts (this one by the artist who was sketching these experiments in the days before photography) there was huge reluctance by scientists to accept that there was such a phenomenon. Their reasons may sound very familiar to those of us interested in UFOs.

Firstly, there was no hard and fast evidence. No reliable photos and, indeed, even today good visual evidence of BL is actually less common than it is for UFOs. There are no known accepted moving images, for example.

Secondly, the behaviour of BL was paradoxical. It had been alleged to pass right through human bodies without causing ill effect and yet in other cases to literally melt the glass on a lamp that it touched or evaporate a huge tub of water in just seconds. So - did BL have massive amounts of energy (in which case how were people often surviving their close encounters with it?) - or was it more

modestly energised (in which case how did it have the power to do the many things it was alleged to do?).

Nobody could come up with plausible answers or an all embracing theory - much as with UFOs where we struggle to accommodate every sighting under one explanation. Of course, this is likely because there are several types of UFO at work.

So, right up until the 1960s it was common to read in physics text books that BL was of uncertain reality and may well just be caused by spots before peoples eyes - that is an after image on the retina triggered by the bright flash of a normal lightning bolt!

Those few scientists interested in BL were as upset by such swift dismissals of theory data as most UFOlogists still are. They fought back citing good evidence - for instance that quite a few BL cases occur in the total absence of lightning so could not possibly be a result of such an easy option theory. But this was not widely persuasive to science.

The whole field was not really taken seriously until pure chance intervened. A physicist flying on an aircraft over New York was himself witness - along with all others on board - when a small ball entered the plane and floated serenely down the aisle just above ground level. The plane was flying through a thunderstorm but nobody knew how such a BL event could get inside or then leave the sealed hull of the plane, which should have shielded any electrical effects.

A huge debate has followed this event 40 years ago but at least now ball lightning is sufficiently credible to be discussed in the pages of *Nature* or *New Scientist* and for lab funds to be devoted to test the latest theories. Numerous ideas have been proposed to try and explain it - mostly stimulated by this first case - even though it was really no better than dozens of others documented earlier than it.

BL has transformed from derision to acceptance in a short time and it was not the sea of well documented eye witness accounts or the feeble record of physical evidence that achieved this. Nor was it the existence of any agreed theory - as there remains much contention over several rival options today.

Indeed the study of BL in terms of evidence is remarkably like UFOlogy in so far as its extent, contentiousness and lack of any

coherently persuasive answer for all sightings. Perhaps the only key difference is that it was by coincidence seen and documented without fear of ridicule by a scientist whom nobody could dispute.

Of course, in addition, the fact that nobody was suggesting that BL required some kind of exotic theory in order to explain it was probably important. One thinks that if UFOlogy was being 'sold' as some kind of atmospheric anomaly rather than as visitations by aliens, or if BL was being popularly argued to be some kind of unrecognised species of electric eel that lives undetected in the lower atmosphere and from time to time descends to attack houses and people then the position might well be very different.

### Lessons to be learned?

What can we learn from all of this? One possibility is that we should expend more effort on compiling a record of those scientists who have witnessed unexplained UFO sightings and who are willing to go on record in front of their peers.

Barring Professor Stephen Hawking having a close encounter and telling the world tomorrow that what he saw defies explanation and so needs legitimate study (with, one might expect, at least some whipping up of interest amongst his peers) we maybe could help the situation by moderating our claims somewhat, Restrict ourselves to arguing what our data can reasonably prove not what we would fondly like it to prove.

Another consideration is to do a survey of working scientists to see who will stand up and be counted as regards to their own observations. As we know the more a witness has to lose in terms of social status the more likely they will keep their sighting to themselves. This may be the biggest single hurdle that UFOlogy needs to address and to which we expend almost no effort. But as we saw with BL it is perhaps the best way to make a difference.

When that sort of evidence is laid before the scientific mainstream they just might start to pay attention to UFOs in the way that they did with BL in the 1960s.

It is also worth emphasising that there are real opportunities here. The reason that BL research is moderately well-funded is because there is a possibility that by harnessing it we

will develop new power sources of genuine practical advantage and that will earn big corporations money!

My experience is that about one in ten reported UFO sightings are likely to be potential examples of what we might call 'super BL' - very extreme incidents that science simply never documents because they get reported beyond their remit and go instead to UFOlogists. By bringing this data into the realms of science it could quite significantly improve their knowledge of rare atmospheric phenomena.

Indeed adding data on radiation exposure that may result in some close encounter witnesses, the consequences of atmospheric ionization and so forth - these things could further the difficulty that BL researchers still have in defining a working theory. They could be failing to progress because they do not have access to the key cases - these are coming to UFOlogists unaware that they are dealing with a scientific anomaly that could really benefit from the very evidence that UFOlogy is regularly receiving.

Then again, if it is possible that from the several UFO cases on my files where clouds seem to have been 'parted' in the presence of ionising UFOs we have another opportunity. Rather than argue it out with ourselves or the media - fighting big fights that we are ill equipped to face up to - is it not a good idea to think about the consequences and potential spin offs from UFO data?

For if we can work out how these clouds were parted it does not really matter much whether the UFO was a spaceship, a UAP or BL. What could matter is how we can apply this knowledge to, for example, relieve areas in danger of flooding by using a reliable method to dissipate clouds and alleviate suffering.

These are the sorts of cases where we have a real chance of getting together with scientists and working to the common good of humanity. How much better for our shattered image if UFOlogy was seen to be trying to do something truly useful based on our evidence rather than arguing amongst ourselves over theories about little green men that to many people only single us out as obsessive crackpots?

# THE BIG GREY MAN OF BEN MACDHUI & OTHER MOUNTAIN PANICS (part 2)

ANDY ROBERTS

*'Though your nerves be of steel, and your mind says it cannot be,  
you will be acquainted with that fear without a name, that  
intense dread of the unknown that has pursued mankind from  
the very dawn of time.'*  
Richard Frere[1]

Despite rumours that the BGM was experienced frequently by climbers in the late 19th century the only record from that century is that of Professor Norman Collie's 1891 encounter. This experience is the one most often quoted by writers on the subject and the one which brought the BGM to the general public's attention.

Collie was Professor of Organic Chemistry at University College, London. A climbing contemporary of Aleister Crowley he was a keen all-weather mountaineer well used to the rigours of the Himalayas, Alps, Rockies and Scotland. Collie was a rigorous scientist who was closely involved with the discovery of the gas neon, and was responsible for taking the first X-ray for surgical purposes.[23]

Collie did not go public in the U.K. with his experience until 1925, although there is circumstantial evidence his was the tale recounted in Baker's book, as the two were climbing partners[24]. Speaking at the Annual Dinner of the Cairngorm Club on November 28th that year, he recounted his frightening experience on Ben Macdhui. His story was published within days by an Aberdeen newspaper and shortly afterwards in the *Cairngorm Club Journal*. The account in the *Press and Journal* read:

'I was returning from the cairn on the summit in a mist when I began to think I heard something else than merely the noise of my own footsteps. For every few steps I took I heard a crunch, and then another crunch as if someone was walking after me but taking steps three or four times the length of my own. I said to myself 'This is all nonsense'. I listened and heard it again but could see nothing in the mist. As I walked on and the eerie crunch, crunch, sounded behind me I was seized with terror and took to my heels, staggering blindly among the boulders for four or five miles nearly down to Rothiemurchus Forest.

Whatever you make of it I do not know, but there is something very queer about the top of Ben Macdhui and I will not go back there by myself I know.'[25]

The only other first person account of his experience comes from the obituary published following Collie's death in 1942.

'One day at Eastertime I was climbing Ben Macdhui. It was very misty and I was only able to see a few yards from me when not very far from the summit, I suddenly heard footsteps on the snow behind me. Confident that some man was following me, I waited for him to join me, but the moment I stopped the footsteps also stopped. When I started on my way again, once more I heard the footsteps clearly. More than ever convinced that some man was on my track I turned and ran back for some distance, but found no-one. Once again I started on my way to the summit and once again I heard footsteps which stopped whenever I stopped. When at last I reached the summit the footsteps did not stop but came nearer and nearer until they came right up to me. At that instant I was seized with an intolerable fright and I ran my hardest down the mountainside. No power on earth will ever take me up Ben Macdhui again.[26]

According to his biographer, Collie was true to his word and never climbed Ben Macdhui again.[27]

Baly, Collie's obituarist had, at times, worked and climbed with him and his unreferenced account gives the impression it was obtained verbatim from Collie. But it differs slightly from the account in both the *Press and Journal* and the *Cairngorm Club Journal*, changing the story slightly. The *Press and Journal* article and Baly's obituary have been the two sources from which all subsequent re-tellings of Collie's experience have been taken.



Another element often used by writers dealing with the BGM is to suggest that although Collie didn't speak publicly about his experience in the U.K. until 1925, he had originally revealed his story in an obscure New Zealand newspaper at the turn of the century. Despite no one having seen or referenced the original source - usually given as an article entitled *A Professor's Panic* - it is nevertheless used to add weight to the story. It is first mentioned in an article about the BGM by Ronald W. Clark in *Scotland's Magazine*, November 1961. However there is no evidence, according to his biographer, that Collie visited New Zealand until the 1930s.[28]

Yet another variation which has crept into the Collie story is that he saw the 'something' which was causing the footsteps. This canard stems from Seton Gordon's retelling of the experience. Gordon used the phrase 'Collie encountered this spectre', seeming to infer a visual encounter. But this statement is not backed up by Collie's 1925 account, and it is clear from Gordon's overall context that Collie saw nothing[29]. His experience was purely the hearing of footsteps, followed by blind panic.

It has been suggested that Collie invented the whole story having, according to Rennie McOwen, 'a mild reputation as a prankster'.[30] But again, accounts differ. Affleck Gray believed him to be 'sardonic and dry as dust, he did not suffer fools gladly'.[31] In her biography Mills notes that despite his scientific rigour Collie was a bit of a nature mystic who believed in the Loch Ness Monster.[32]

Whatever his character, whatever the minor variations in the story it appears that Collie *did* have a terrifying experience and one which had a dramatic effect on him. He was convinced that there was 'something very strange' about the summit of Ben Macdhui, something he clearly believed was supernatural in origin. His biographer spoke to Collie's niece about the matter and she confirmed that she had heard the story from him many times and that 'Uncle Nor believed in it completely'.[33]

Collie, for all his science, was not a reductionist though and well understood the atmospheres created by wild places. Years prior to revealing his Ben Macdhui experience he wrote '...there are places that one dreads, when one trembles and is afraid, one knows not why and fears stand in the way'.[34] In her

discussion of the matter Collie's biographer concludes that, 'Collie remained emphatic - something beyond the wit of man haunted that mountain'.[35]

Shortly after the newspaper coverage of Collie's Cairngorm Club speech the *Press & Journal* ran a piece entitled 'Opinions on the Elusive "Big Grey Man"'. Several Cairngorm Club members, with hundreds of Ben Macdhui ascents between them, opined on the legend. Robert Clarke claimed he had heard the story direct from Collie in 1915 and as a result made enquiries in the area among the older deer stalkers and crofters. He found that it was virtually unknown on Deeside to the south but that it was 'still current among the older residents on Speyside, where it had apparently had its rise'.[36].

William Gordon, then president of the Cairngorm Club, regarded such stories as 'perfect nonsense', although having heard the story direct from Collie himself. Gordon is quoted as saying 'It was not even a tradition entertained, as such, among the members of the club, nor had he ever encountered residents on the Deeside or Speyside districts, abutting upon the Cairngorms who gave forth the story or hinted at anything of the kind'.[37] Arguments as to whether or not there was a pre-existent tradition of the BGM raged in newspapers, magazines and climbing journals for the next few years but no specific oral or written tradition pre-dating Collie's experience has ever surfaced.

The second account of the BGM originates from another mountaineer and medical colleague, Dr Henry Kellas. Unfortunately neither he nor his brother, with him at the time, ever recorded their experience and Henry Kellas died on the 1921 Mount Everest Reconnaissance Expedition. Their account, also widely featured in the BGM legend featured, first appeared in print as a letter in the pages of the *Press and Journal* in December 1925, following hot on the heels of Collie's speech to the Cairngorm Club. The account read:

'The correspondence in your paper on the subject of the Ferla Mohr has encouraged me to state the story as given to me by the late Mr Henry Kellas, my lifelong friend, with whom I once climbed Ben Macdhui. He and his brother, Dr Kellas, had been chipping for crystals in the late afternoon well below the cairn, and were together on the slope of a fold of the hill. Suddenly they became aware of a

giant figure coming down towards them from the cairn. They saw it pass out of sight in the dip on the side of the fold remote from themselves, and awaited its reappearance. But fear possessed them ere it did reach the top, and they fled. They were aware it was following them, and tore down by Corrie Etchachan to escape it. Mr Kellas said there was a mist on part of the hill, but refused to believe that the figure could be the shadow of either his brother or himself, causing an optical illusion. He asked why not *two* figures if that had been the case. But he never spoke of 'crunching' or of footsteps being *heard* by either himself or his brother.'[38]

This is not a primary source for the story and must be treated as such. But if we allow for it being a genuine account with a degree of accuracy, it is the first recorded sighting of a giant figure. Kellas' certainty that it couldn't be a Brocken Spectre because there were two witnesses to one phenomenon is not borne out by the factors which govern the Brocken's appearance and would have depended on where he was standing in relative to his brother. The conditions of mist and light mentioned in the account would have been optimum for a Brocken to be seen. But Brockens only move if the observer/s moves and going on the details given it is difficult to ascertain whether Kellas and his brother were standing or moving. Given that they were chipping for crystals the likelihood is that they were stationary at the time.

The date of the Kellas brothers experience is unclear. Affleck Gray points to it being twelve years after Collie's encounter, placing it in 1903. There is also some confusion as to the exact circumstances. The *Press & Journal* account gives it as being on a late afternoon. Gray mentions that it was late on a clear June night. A clear June night in those latitudes, even after midnight, would have been very light. Gray does not reference his alternate version and I have been unable to contact him or locate his papers on the subject.

But the panic engendered by the experience, whatever its origin, seemed to be real enough and like Collie the Kellas brothers fled. And not just a few yards, or even hundreds of yards, but several miles, risking life and limb over rough and dangerous terrain.

Mountaineer Alexander Tewnion wrote an account of his 1943 BGM experience for The Scots Magazine:

'Of all the experiences that have come my way, one stands out above all others in its strangeness. This was when I shot the Fear Liath Mor, the Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui. It happened like this. In October 1943 I spent a ten day leave climbing alone in the Cairngorms. Rations were short then, and I carried a revolver and ammunition to shoot any hares or ptarmigan that came my way. One afternoon, just as I reached the summit cairn of Ben Macdhui, mist swirled across the Lairig Ghru and enveloped the mountain. The atmosphere became dark and oppressive, a fierce, bitter wind whisked among the boulders, and, fearing a storm was imminent; I took hurriedly to the Coire Etchachan path. Above Loch Etchachan the path angles easily downhill. I was swinging along at about five miles an hour when an odd sound echoed through the mist - a loud footstep, it seemed. Then another, and another. Spaced at long intervals!'

'I am not unduly imaginative, but my thoughts flashed instantly to the well-known story of Professor Norman Collie and the Fear Liath Mor. Then I felt the reassuring weight of the loaded revolver in my pocket. Grasping the butt I peered about in the mist, here rent and tattered by eddies of wind. A strange shape loomed up, receded, came charging at me! Without hesitation I whipped out the revolver and fired three times at the figure. When it still came on I turned and hared down the path, reaching Glen Derry in a time I have never bettered since. You may ask, was it really the Fear Liath Mor? Frankly, I think it was. Many times since then I have traversed Macdhui in mist, bivouacked on it in the open, camped near its summit for days on end on different occasions - often alone, and always with an easy mind. For on that day I am convinced I shot the only Fear Liath Mor my imagination will ever see.'[39]

Tewnion's experience is widely quoted in the BGM literature. The fact that someone would be so scared as to pull a *gun* on the phenomenon *and* fire it, gives considerable weight to the 'reality' of the experience. It also contains *all* the criteria for a BGM experience. It cannot easily be explained in terms of a Brocken Spectre. Yet few writers quote Tewnion's letter to Affleck Gray in 1966 when he wrote:

'To this day I am convinced that I saw something but I am equally convinced that something was only a towering wisp of mist which I imagined to be a menacing ghost.'[40]



Peter Densham recounted his BGM experience verbally to many friends but did not write an account himself. Eventually it was recorded by his friend, mountaineer and author Richard Frere. The encounter took place in May 1945 when Densham was in charge of aeroplane rescue in the Cairngorms during W.W.II. Densham arrived at the summit around mid-day and settled down to eat his sandwiches and:

'.....was eating a piece of chocolate a little later when I had the sudden impression there was someone near me - an impression which is sometimes experienced by mountaineers. I did not pay much attention to the impression knowing it was fairly common. After a little I had the impression of something cold on the top of my neck. I had the hood of my anorak down. I thought this feeling of cold was due to the air having become more moist, but I still seemed to feel a pressure on my neck. I stood up and was conscious of a crunching noise from the direction of the cairn on my left. I went forward to investigate this noise. When I got near to this cairn I began to think of the Grey Man and his footsteps. I thought this experience very interesting and until within a few feet of the apparent source of the sound I was not the least frightened. Suddenly, however, I was overcome by a feeling of apprehension and after a little my overpowering wish was to get off the mountain. I found myself running at an incredible pace, and then realised that I was running in the direction of Lurcher's Crag. I tried to stop myself and found this was extremely difficult to do. It was as if somebody was pushing me. I managed to deflect my course, but with a great deal of difficulty, and I managed to strike the direction between the left of the Lairig Ghru and Coire an Lochain. I ran down the ridge all the way to the Allt Mor Bridge, and all the way past Glenmore, and I was right on the other side of the loch before I stopped running.'[41]

Densham's account flags up several points. The most significant is that although his experience is firmly enshrined within BGM lore like Collie *he did not see anything* at all. Densham's experience consisted solely of feeling a presence and being gripped by a fear. As with other BGM experiences the fear was so compelling that it caused him to run blindly for several miles, narrowly avoiding certain death if he had run over Lurcher's Crag. The phrase 'I found myself running at an incredible speed' suggests he was fully aware of what was happening, yet so overpowered by it he could

not stop it. Also, according to Affleck Gray, Densham was aware of the BGM legend and 'scornful' of any power which could make a man flee in terror.[42] He later had another unusual experience on Ben Macdhui involving phantom voices. He attributed both incidents to a 'psychic' origin, the 'effect on his consciousness of undefined properties of the mountain' and contended that Ben Macdhui was '...the most mysterious mountain I have ever been on.'[43]

These four accounts are the most important ones relating to the BGM which have come to light as being from Ben Macdhui and which incorporate elements of the core phenomenon. There are however a couple of tales from the vicinity of Ben Macdhui which may have some relevance to the mystery.

(Continued next issue)

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# THE DRAGONS OF YORKSHIRE

BY RICHARD FREEMAN (CFZ)

## INTRODUCTION

Of all legendary monsters, the dragon is both the most widespread and the most ancient. They flap and slither through almost every culture from the Mas D'A Zil Mesolithic cultures of twelve thousand years ago to contemporary tales of winged serpents in Africa.

Several species of dragon are spoken of, so before we delve into what might be behind the legends, it may be as well to examine these differing draconian types...

### 1. The Heraldic or 'true' Dragon

Also known as the '*Fire Drake*' this was the most powerful of all dragons. A huge quadrupedal reptile, it had huge, bat-like wings. The heraldic dragon was armed with savage teeth and claws and had a mighty tail. Its most formidable weapon, however, was undoubtedly, the white-hot gusts of flame, it could spit at its victims.

Heraldic dragons were the most magical of beasts. They had many powers attributed to them including shape/form changing, self healing, invisibility and mind-reading. These dragons were almost impossible to kill, being covered with scales harder than steel. They, (like '*Smaug*' in '*The Hobbit*' by J.R.R. Tolkien) had one tiny spot of vulnerability, but the location of this 'spot' was never the same in two different dragons.

### 2. The Wyvern

A very similar beast to the creature described above, but with only one pair of legs. It is also usually depicted as being somewhat smaller than the gigantic heraldic dragons. The wyvern bore a deadly barbed sting in its tail, and was believed to spread pestilence and disease in its wake.

### 3. The Guivre or Worm

This is the commonest Celtic dragon. The worm was a vast limbless serpent. It inhabited vast lakes, marshes and rivers. Worms killed by crushing their victims in their enveloping coils (like a constricting snake) and with their

poisonous breath which they used in much the same way as the other species used their breath of fire. This poison had the ability to shrivel crops and choke both man and beast.

This type of dragon (as typified in its most famous example – '*The Lambton Worm*') could rejoin itself together after having been hacked in two and was thus extremely difficult to kill.

### 4. The Lindorm or Blind Worm

This odd creature resembled the Guivre, except for possessing a pair of hind legs. It seems not to be as linked to water as the preceding type and is mostly reported from Asia and Southern Europe.

### 5. The Amphiptere

This was a limbless winged serpent generally reported from the Middle East and North Africa. Amphipteres are still reported today in the South East African country of Namibia.

### 6. The Eastern Dragons

Unlike their occidental counterparts, oriental dragons were portrayed as being beneficial in nature. They controlled the weather, the seas and the rivers. Interestingly, at different stages of their development, they seemed to resemble one or other of the standard western types of dragons.

Oriental dragon eggs took a thousand years to hatch, and the young dragons resembled snakes. After five hundred years, they resembled giant snakes with the heads of carp. Five hundred more years and they developed a bearded reptilian head and four legs. A further five hundred years brought horns, and the final stage, after yet another five centuries, brought forth wings, with the final result looking like an ornate, but skinny analogue of the western fire drake.

Many scholars have argued about what lies at the root of this most universal of legends. Fossilised dinosaur bones have been hypothesised as the remains of dragons in many areas. In China they are still known as '*Dragons Bones*' and are prized in powdered



form within various types of folk medicine. Dragon legends do, however, occur in places where no fossil bones have ever been found, and moreover, some legends speak specifically in terms of live dragons and their interactions with mankind, rather than just in terms of a pile of petrified bones.

It is time to cover these skeletons with some flesh!

## LIVING DRAGONS

Some species of living reptile can achieve an immense size. Crocodiles are the largest and most dangerous of these.

*Crocodylus porosus* the Indo-Pacific crocodile is an awesome beast. The largest specimen measured by an expert was twenty eight feet in length, but larger individuals almost certainly exist. James Montgomery, a rubber tapper in northern Borneo saw a specimen measuring over thirty feet in length on the Sagama River during the 1950s.

The local Seluka people believed it to be '*The Father of the Devil*' and threw silver coins into the river to appease it. This provides an irresistible parallel to the hordes of treasure said to be guarded by so many European dragons. Today the Ibad people of Sarawak venerate '*Bujang-Senang*' - the '*King of the Crocodiles*' - a twenty-five foot specimen who haunts the Lumpar River and is a known man eater.

The Nile Crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*), is worshipped by many tribes throughout Africa. It grows to over twenty one feet in length, but reports from Central Africa's Congo rainforests suggest it may rival It's Indo-Pacific cousin in size.

Between them, these two species account for more human deaths than any other vertebrate, with the exception of man himself. They will also kill lion, buffalo, giraffe and even sharks!

Giant constricting snakes make good prototype 'worms'. *Python reticulatus* - the reticulate python reaches thirty three feet in length and can take on prey as large as a leopard.

The anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*), is not as long, reaching a maximum recorded size of 23 feet, but is far more massive in girth and weight. It is amphibious in nature and extremely aggressive.

The worlds largest lizard is the komodo dragon (*Varanus komodensis*). Discovered in 1912 on a handful of tiny Indonesian islands it can reach twelve feet in length. This giant monitor lizard has serrated teeth containing a virulent bacteria that causes wounds inflicted by the fangs to rot and fester. If an animal survives the initial bite its wounds will seep and stink - the smell leading the giant lizard to it. Chinese pottery, hundreds of years old, has been unearthed on Komodo island suggesting that the ancient Chinese may well have been familiar with this gigantic reptile.

However, in Australia, an even bigger monitor lizard existed until the end of the Pleistocene epoch. *Megalania prisca* grew to over thirty feet in length and was the continent's supreme terrestrial predator. Reports suggest that this terrifying creature may still stalk the wilder parts of the continent.

From the 1830s onwards white men have been reporting what the native Australians have been reporting since times immemorial. Most of these sightings emanate from New South Wales. The most important was made by a professional herpetologist called Frank Gordon in 1979. Gordon, who had been conducting field work, returned to his land-rover. On starting his engine he was astonished to see a nearby 'log' rear up and lumber away. The 'log' was a thirty foot lizard!

Explorer John Blashford-Snell did some important work in Papua New-Guinea concerning a mythical animal called the *Artrellia*, which he hypothesised as being a giant form of Salvador's Monitor (*V. salvadori*) which can grow to a greater length (although a smaller bulk) than the Komodo Dragon.

Victorian author, Charles Gould, postulated a similar reptile inhabiting central Asia. Gould's hypothetical 'dragon' had ribbed 'wings' like the South East Asian flying lizard (*Draco volens*), and a constricting tail.

The problem with all the above animals is that they live only in the tropics. Dragon legends are universal and thousands of them come from temperate or even sub arctic areas!

In 1979, Peter Dickinson offered a unique theory in his book '*The Flight of Dragons*'. Dickinson's idea was that dragons evolved from large carnivorous dinosaurs like Tyrannosaurus Rex. They developed large, expanded stomachs filled with hydrogen gas.

The hydrogen evolved from a mixture of hydrochloric acid in the digestive juices mixed with the calcium found in the bones of their prey.

This lighter than air gas allowed them to fly. They controlled their flight by burning off excess gas as flames.

Other ideas are even more esoteric. Many people have commented on the parallels between modern 'alien abduction cases' and the folk legends of people kidnapped by elves and taken to fairyland.

Both have elements of missing time and memory. Both feature 'implants' - high tech probes on the part of the aliens, and magic silver pins inserted by mischievous elves. They seem to be the same phenomenon, adapting to, or filtered through the collective sub-conscious fears of mankind. What were once elves and pixies are now bug-eyed aliens. Could this not be the same for dragons?

There seems to be some analogue between UFOs and dragons. Both are often seen near water and both seem to be cross cultural. They both seem powerful and 'above' mankind. UFOs outpace places and seem to defy all attempts to capture them (Roswell shenanigans excluded!) Early dragon legends portray them as beasts of god-like power and universal consequence.

It was only later that the tales of more mortal dragons and dragon slayers emerged. These can be interpreted as allegorical tales signifying Christianity's triumph over paganism. (Can anyone really believe that a puny knight on a his figurative mouse of a horse, being able to triumph over a mighty reptilian dragon?)

## YORKSHIRE DRAGON LEGENDS

Theorising aside, let us now consider the visitations of a draconian nature upon the fair county of Yorkshire.

### The Dragon of Wantley

This was a 'true' winged, fire breathing dragon. It terrorised the country surrounding Wantley, killing livestock and people, and burning crops and buildings. The populace enlisted the help of a huge and grim knight known as More of More hall.

For payment, More insisted, that prior to the battle, he be anointed by a fair skinned, black haired maid of sixteen. (He had impeccable taste in women!)

More had fashioned himself a suit of armour studded with spikes six inches long. He then hid in a well to ambush the dragon when it came down to drink.

The fight lasted for two days and a night, with neither opponent being able to pierce the others armour. The dragon seized More, intent on hurling him into the air like a rag doll, when More saw the beast's vulnerable spot and delivered a fatal kick with a spiked boot. Unromantically the one vulnerable and unarmoured place turned out to be the dragon's anus!

The legend was recorded in a light-hearted ballad dating from 1699.

Some say that the whole tale is a satire based on a lawsuit over tithes in the reign of James I. The dragon being Sir Frances Wortley, who held the disputed tithes, and More being the Attourney who set a lawsuit against him on behalf of nearby gentry. The spiked armour being a document full of names and seals of men pledged to oppose Wortley.

However, several motifs in the tale, such as the spiked armour, the well, and the (almost) invulnerable dragon argue that the 1699 poem was adapted from a far more ancient legend. Wantley, it seems, may once have had a very real dragon.

### The Dragon of Filey

The hero of this tale is not a knight, a wizard or a lord, but a 'hen-pecked', meek, little tailor named Billy Biter. Whilst walking along the cliffs one misty morning he tumbled into a ravine, that again turned out to be the lair of a 'true' heraldic-type dragon.

The dragon was about to devour him when Billy offered him the parkin (a Yorkshire delicacy somewhat akin to a cross between a treacle tart and a gingerbread man), that he had been carrying. The dragon enjoyed this piece of gooey confectionary so much that he demanded more and turned Billy loose.

Running home, he told his wife who insisted on making parkin for the dragon. As well as being domineering she was also a dreadful cook and produced the biggest and stickiest



parkin in the history of Yorkshire. Billy rolled the parkin into the dragon's lair, and when the beast began to eat it, its jaws became stuck fast. The dragon flew into the sea to wash the parkin away but was overcome by the icy waves. Its bones turned to stone and became Filey Brigg, a mile long projection of rocks that juts out to sea.

A parkin makes a nice change as a death dealing weapon from lances and swords! This odd tale has a dramatic modern-day sequel... but more of that later.

### The Worm of Loschey Mill /Slingsby/Kellington

A confusing one this. All three tales are almost exactly the same and quite possibly have evolved from one 'root' legend. Loschy Mill, in the parish of Stonegrave was the lair of a great worm with poisonous breath. The serpent could rejoin severed segments of itself and had venomous blood.

Sir Peter Loschy, a local knight, fought the worm whilst wearing razor studded armour, and brandishing a huge sword. He was aided by his faithful dog (whose name history does not recall). The hound would grab segments of the worm whenever his master lopped one off, and ran to the neighbouring village of Nunnington. In this way the worm could not rejoin with its severed segments and was eventually killed.

However, when the knight congratulated his hound, it licked its master's hand and both master and hound died from the worm's deadly blood.

In the Slingsby version it is Sir William Wyville, and his dog who kill the worm and succumb to its blood. At Kellington, however, it is a humble shepherd and sheepdog who perform the deed and pay for it with their lives.

### The Sexhow Worm

On a hill in this village, a worm took up residence and demanded tribute of the milk of nine cows every day. Its venomous breath killed all those who opposed it until an anonymous knight rode into Sexhow. After a savage fight he slew the worm and went on his way asking for no reward. The villagers skinned the giant snake and displayed the hide at nearby Stokesley church where it remained for many years. Unfortunately for

cryptozoologists everywhere the skin has long since vanished.

### The Handale Worm

This beast is a bit of a hybrid. It was said to have a crested head and to breath fire like a dragon, to have a sting like a wyvern, but to be a 'serpent' (like a worm, presumably). It haunted the woods near to Handle priory, devouring young women. Eventually a brave peasant youth named Scaw fought the worm armed only with a sword. After a savage struggle he slew the serpent and found an Earl's daughter in its cave. Scaw married her and acquired vast estates.

The wood where the worm once lurked is now called Scaw wood, and a stone coffin in the ruins of the priory is said to be Scaw's.

### The Dragon of Well

This 'true' dragons reign of terror was brought to an end by a young knight named Latimer. He concealed himself in a spiked barrel, and when the dragon attempted to bite into it it succeeded only in wounding itself. Once it was sufficiently wounded, he emerged and finished the horror off. From then on a dragon appeared on the armorial bearings of the Latimer family.

### The Bilsdale dragon

This creature is known only from the scantiest of rumours. A tumulus or barrow known as "Drakes Hill", is reputed to contain treasures guarded by a dragon (which is presumably still in residence).

Sightings of land dragons are rare today (although they persist in parts of Asia and Africa, such as the flying snakes reported from Namibia)

### SEA DRAGONS

Dragonlike creatures are, however, still seen around the coast of Britain and some have even visited Yorkshire.

The first and most dramatic encounter took place on the 28th Feuary 1934 on Filey Brig, (Fortean's will notice the "coincidence"). Fishermen had been reporting seeing a strange creature between Scarborough and Flamborough Head albeit from a distance of about three miles. On the dark, moonless night of the 28th, coastguard Wilkinson Herbert was

wandering along the Brig when, in his own words:

*"Suddenly, I heard a growling like a dozen dogs ahead. Walking nearer I switched on my torch, and was confronted by a huge neck, six yards ahead of me, rearing up eight feet high! The head was a startling sight, - huge tortoise eyes glaring at me like saucers. The creature's mouth would be a foot wide and the creature's neck would be a yard around.*

*"The monster was as startled as I was. Shining my torch along the ground I saw a body about thirty feet long. I thought, 'this is no place for me', and from a distance I threw stones at the creature. It moved away growling fiercely, and I saw that the huge black body had two humps on it, and four short legs with huge flippers on them. It was the most gruesome and thrilling experience. I have seen big animals abroad but nothing like this!"*

Mr Herbert's report remains one of the most spectacular on record anywhere in the world.

In 1938, Mrs Joan Borgeest saw a sea dragon off Eastington in North Yorkshire. Whilst looking out to sea from the beach she suddenly saw...

*"A huge creature rise; it was a green colour, with a flat head, protruding eyes, and a long, flat mouth which opened and shut as it breathed. It was a great length and moved along with a humped glide".*

The beast was only ninety metres away and dived when she called to some other people. Mrs Borgeest was teased by 'friends' and kept quiet about her story until 1961 when the BBC broadcast a radio programme about sea monsters.

In August 1945, Mr B.M. Baylis of Spilsby, and some friends of his, saw a monster.

*"We were sitting on the edge of low mud cliffs at Hilston between Hornsea and Withernsea. There we saw a creature with a head and four or five rounded humps each leaving a wake. It was moving rapidly, but quite silently along the shore, north westwards in the face of a northerly wind. Nobody at the time believed our report, but we are convinced that we saw something".*

## CONCLUSION

One could write volumes on what these things could be, but space will not allow such an endeavour here. I would say, however, that in my opinion the living dragons are giant warm blooded reptiles. Dragons still have a relentless grip on our collective minds, both conscious and unconscious, and so we should not really be too surprised when they raise their scaly heads from time to time, even in this day and age.

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## BOOK REVIEW

By Mark P Martin

### *"OUT OF THE SHADOWS"*

by Andy Roberts and Dr David Clarke.

Published by Piatkus Books

ISBN 0 7499 22990 7

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The British Government has always claimed no interest in UFOs. This is a lie. For decades rumours the Government had more concern about UFOs that it admitted to, have abounded. Now we have proof. In the past, some authors have found bits and scraps of circumstantial evidence. Others have merely repeated unfounded claims and myths. Roberts and Clarke are refreshingly different; they diligently excavated Top Secret documents from the bowels of the Ministry of Defence and Public Record Office. They have tracked down and quizzed original witnesses, including RAF Wing Commanders, Test Pilots and Intelligence agents

Over the decades several notorious UFO incidents have been offered as evidence of Alien intrusion. The authors examined such cases. They argue strongly and concisely that their new material, found in the original roots of cases, turns many mysteries mundane. However, supporters of the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis will appreciate that some episodes defy prosaic rationalisation. Some events recorded in official files by utterly credible witnesses must be regarded as truly paranormal.

In 1992 the British Government stated it wished dispel its aura of secrecy and become more open. The Freedom of Information Act 2000, drafted in November of that year, will be fully implemented in 2005. As a forerunner its policy now, is of increased co-operation towards people who wish to see official files.

Andy and Dave benefited from this; such files were crucial to their research. However, their search for evidence and information was not easy. Years were spent hunting through musty archives. Perseverance produced results, the discovery of a ufological "Holy Grail"; documentary proof the British Government has conducted Top Secret UFO research. They unearthed a document entitled "Flying Saucer Working Party".

In 1950 a small team of senior military and intelligence specialists assembled to study hundreds of real X-Files.

The book runs chronologically, from World War Two when RAF pilots had "Screaming dogfights" with "things" and mystery "lights" (this was several years before people used the terms UFO and Flying Saucer.). As you would expect the mythical Rendelsham incident is analysed. The writers score another first here. In May 2001 they discovered the Governments official file on the events that unfolded in that dark, frozen East Anglian forest

My only criticism: a few minor mistakes, such as the names and technical details of aircraft being wrong. These slight mishaps don't affect the books' great strength.

Many UFO books lean towards the melodramatic and sinister. This one does not. Rather it is absorbing, intriguing and intellectually nutritious. Stimulating, not titillating. The UFO research community and general readers should value this.

The tome is a 282-page hardback; well illustrated, with a bibliography, thoroughly referenced and indexed.

Available at discounted prices from [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk) and [piatkus.com](http://piatkus.com).

*Out of the Shadows* is a fine piece of writing of craft. A superb example of proper UFO research.

Recommended.

# BUTCHERS FROM BEYOND

BY JON DOWNES (CFZ)

The following is a taster from a forthcoming book by Jonathan Downes, of the Centre for Fortean Zoology. A revised and updated version of this chapter will appear in the completed tome, and will no doubt be reviewed in these very pages. Many thanks to Jon for giving us a tantalising glimpse of this work-in-progress...

During the spring and summer of 1986 there were a number of attacks on domestic livestock - especially guinea pigs and rabbits in the St. Thomas area of Exeter. This is the next suburb to the one where I live, and as I have always kept small animals as pets myself I was particularly disturbed by the incidents - especially as the locations moved slowly nearer my own house in Exwick. With unnerving originality the local newspaper referred to these incidents as being the work of "The Beast of St Thomas".

The exact number of incidents is unclear, especially as at least some of the killings were proved to be the work of a vicious schoolboy, and yet others were said to be the responsibility of two dogs - a terrier and an alsatian seen wandering unsupervised around a local housing estate.

Local officials blamed the killings on mink, and even badgers, but on at least one occasion it appears that something rather less tangible was responsible.

One night in October 1986 I was sitting on the back step of my house, looking up the thirty feet or so of steep slope which the Council Tax assessors still insist is a garden. My so-called 'garden' backs on to the slightly less dirisble gardens of the houses in a street parallel to the estate where I live and just up the hill. Suddenly I heard a scream. When agents Mulder and Scully et al are sitting in their gardens minding their own business and suddenly hear a scream they reach for their hand-guns and their mobile telephones and suddenly adopt the personae of suave FBI agents. I, being both English and drunk came over all middle class and reticent and pretended to ignore the whole thing. Then I heard another scream and the sound of a woman crying so hard that she appeared almost incoherent with grief.

I shouted into the darkness to find out what was wrong and to offer my assistance. Much to my surprise she shouted back and accused me of owning an enormous grey alsatian that

had just run down her garden towards my property and which had killed over a dozen of her pet guinea pigs. At that time my dog Toby, (who has always been rather fond of small cuddly creatures, and to my knowledge at least has never killed anything larger than a spider) was a tiny puppy and was asleep in my kitchen. I tried to reassure the woman of this but she was so upset, she was beyond reason, and so I retreated into my house for more whisky, and it was only the next morning that I realised that if she had seen a 'grey alsatian' run down the slope into my garden, it should have run straight past me, and I had seen nothing of the kind.

By way of a little detective work I found out which householder owned the garden in which the event took place, and the following weekend, feeling a certain amount of trepidation I knocked on the door. The woman answered and upon being introduced to Toby (who was gambolling around her ankles) both absolved me of blame and invited me into her garden. By this time she had disposed of the carcasses, but according to her description, although they had been covered with 'saliva' they had not been mutilated and there was no blood visible.

I examined the hutches that had once housed the unfortunate beasts. The front doors appeared to have been wrenched off in a manner that suggested a far greater degree of manual dexterity than that one would have associated with even the most intelligent dog. Yet, according to her account the grey dog had been seen by her in front of the ruined hutches with a dead guinea pig in its mouth. The ground was quite damp, yet there were no paw marks of any kind.

I would like to say that in the best traditions of Gothic horror, Toby refused to go near the scene of the 'crime' but in fact he appeared unconcerned, and mildly blotted his copybook by cocking his leg against the hutch and having a nonchalant pee.



Neither the Police nor I ever solved the mystery of "The Beast of St Thomas" and the killings stopped soon after. However it is perhaps worth noting that Burrator Drive, where my particular incident took place was the location in 1997 of the particularly brutal killing of a young girl. Fourteen-year-old Kate Bushell had her throat cut by person or persons unknown - and at the time of writing the case is still unsolved.

But guinea pigs and rabbits are far from being the only creatures whose mysterious deaths I have investigated over the years. Perhaps the most intriguing took place in the autumn of 1997.

In the first week of September 1997 two youths were swimming in Otter Cove, a particularly isolated little bay on the south Devon coast, a few miles from Exmouth. Although it is public property it can only be reached by driving through the grounds of a local holiday camp and then descending a very steep and treacherous concrete path which winds precariously down the cliff face. As darkness drew in they decided to make for the shore and change to go home. As they got changed, one of them looked out to sea. He saw what he described as a 'greenish' light, under the surface. He called to the other young man and they both watched as this light 'rose' to the surface of the water. The next thing they knew there was a very bright light shining into their faces. Frightened they turned and fled the scene.

On the cliffs above, the mother of one of the young men was waiting to collect them in her car. Frightened, they told her of their experience, only to be told that she, too, had experienced something strange that evening. Driving towards Otter Cove about ten minutes before she had seen a strange animal like an enormous cat which she described as being "all lit up inside itself". The strangeness doesn't end here, however. The next day a dead pilot whale was washed up on the beach nearby.

The following report from Nigel Wright is taken from the files of the Exeter Strange Phenomena Research Group:

*"It was about 6. 30 pm when I got to hear of a dead pilot whale, which was washed ashore at Otter Cove. Now, not being a zoologist, I decided to phone Jon, to obtain his advice on how to treat this news. He asked me to go straight down to the cove and try to obtain some photos of the creature, along with some*

*samples. I must admit that the very idea of being so close to this dead leviathan of the ocean was not really something that I was looking forward to. For a start, I had heard of the really quite disgusting smell, that was supposed to emit from such things. Take it from me, this much is true, my nose can testify to this fact. Also, I am quite a sentimental man, and to look at this mammal, as it lay sadly still and yet so complete, on that cooling summer beach, was a sight that almost brought me to tears.*

*The first thing that stuck me, as I looked on at this scene, was how perfect the carcass was. There was no decay or huge chunks torn from it. Then, as I wandered around it I noticed that there was only one external wound, in the area of the genitals a large round incision, the size of a large dinner plate, was cut right into the internal organs of the mammal. The sides of this incision were perfectly formed, as if some giant apple corer had been inserted and twisted around. From the wound hung some of the internal organs. I quizzed the official from English Heritage, who is responsible for the disposal of the carcass, he informed me that no natural predator, or boat strike, would have caused this wound. As I looked at this sight, the first thing that came into my mind was how this looked just like the cattle mutilation cases of recent times. Could this be just a coincidence, I was not certain at that time, I decided to phone Jon again, so I rushed off to find the nearest phone box!*

*Have you ever noticed a funny thing about persons who have a great knowledge of their particular subject. They have a knack of sounding very calm and collected, even when you are tiring to tell them something that is, to you, so very exciting. This is the position I found myself in, that night, as I stood in that phone box. Jon remained very calm and collected as I recounted the details of the strange wound, that I had seen on the creature. In the quiet, restrained tones of a college professor, he just said "Um! Rather interesting". That was it, no outpouring of wild excitement, or ranting at the top of his voice, praising my having found the lost conclusive proof of alien involvement. No, just three little words. However, little was I to know, that this was indeed, a significant moment in our investigations into the mysteries that surround this part of our coastline.*

*Later that week, we had the photos back from the lab, we compared these photos to the ones of classic cases from the U.S. ,of cattle*

mutilation. As if to confirm my initial thoughts, the type of wounds were very similar."

There were no signs of injury to the beast except for a circular hole, apparently incising its genitals and anus. As many people interested in the subject of UFOs are aware, such injuries have been reported on domestic and wild animals, often in conjunction with flaps of UFO activity. At the time that the whale was found south Devon was experiencing one of the biggest outbreaks of UFO activity in British history. It is important to note that the zoologist from *English Nature* who examined the creature was at a loss to explain such peculiar injuries. The fact that a marine mammal exhibiting such injuries is found at this particular time, is, I believe, somewhat significant!

What compounds the strangeness of this episode is that ten years before, almost to the day, another whale was stranded in the area. This time at Otter Cove itself. The *Exmouth Herald* for September 25th 1987 reported:

"Callous looters hacked off the lower jaw of a rare whale washed up near Exmouth to steal its two front teeth. After the 20-ft long Cuvier's beaked whale was found dead at Otter Cove on Monday, Exeter's Royal Albert Museum and the British Museum in London sent experts to retrieve it for research. But during Tuesday night, the whale floated back out into Lyme Bay because nobody had secured it. In the meantime, Customs officers who had arrived to take charge of the carcass on Tuesday morning found that the teeth which are Government property were missing."

Even by the standards of local newspaper reporting this conclusion is a spectacularly unlikely one. The missing lower jaw is another scenario which has been reported time after in UFO related animal mutilations. The coincidence between the locations and the timing (there were also UFO reports in the area in 1987) is worth remarking upon.

The teeth of a whale would make spectacularly uninteresting souvenirs, and as both Nigel and I have come face to face as it were with suppurating cetaceans we both feel it highly unlikely that any but the most psychotic of curio hunters would have summoned up the intestinal fortitude to hack the jaw off the great beast. I have to agree with him, and would add that the task would have been a particularly onerous and time-consuming one. If the mutilation was carried out at night (which it would have to have been in order to escape the

prying eyes of gleeful holiday makers) it would seem almost impossible (having visited the location) that:

a. The operation (which would have needed a chainsaw to complete) could have been carried out without attracting attention.

b. The perpetrators (whoever they were) could have taken the immense jaw up the treacherous cliff path without having incurred an unreasonable degree of danger.

or

c. Anyone would have bothered.

A final refutation of the 'callous souvenir hunter' scenario can be found in zoological descriptions of the species. The dead animal was a female, and although the males of Cuvier's Beaked Whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) have teeth in females the teeth are small and seldom break through the gums so that the animal appears to be toothless. This satisfactorily refutes any allegations that it would have been mutilated by souvenir hunters even if they had had the time, the opportunity or the motive, which is very questionable.

Beaked whales are very rare and even if it had not been for the fact that

A. The Beaked whale was washed up on the same beach as the UFO sightings.

B. Both whales exhibited apparently inexplicable mutilations

C. The whales were washed up ten years apart and according to David Bolton at the Royal Albert Museum in Exeter, apart from two small dolphins there are no other records of cetacea strandings from Lyme Bay

D. Both strandings coincide with other episodes of high strangeness

the stranding would have been interesting anyway. The combination of all these factors is an irresistible one!

It should be noted that as Nigel stated above, at the Dorchester UFO Conference in April 1998, we were told about a series of 'mutilated dolphins' from Brittany, at, apparently the same time as the Otter Cove incident. However despite the impressive reputation of our informant we have not been



able to obtain any more details and so there, for the moment at least, the matter must rest.

A mutilated roebuck was found at a nature reserve on Woodbury Common during the height of the UFO activity in August of the same year and its skull is in my private collection. Interestingly, although the animal was too decomposed for any thorough examination of its wounds, it had been dismembered and both its legs and head were detached from its body. There were, however, no teeth marks as one would expect from predation by 'normal' carnivores, nor were there the marks of knives which would have been found on the bones if the animal had been butchered by a human. Again, although the evidence is not conclusive, and indeed the investigation has not yet been concluded, it appears that this unfortunate beast may have been a genuine UFO related animal mutilation!

British researcher Kevin McClure has, on occasion described the study of such things as the most 'tasteless' form of 'paranormal phenomena'. He considers, with some justification, that these attacks on hapless domestic creatures are the work of perverted human individuals rather than having any genuine paranormal significance. Although he feels that the subject should not be given any credence, and furthermore, that by doing so, researchers are merely encouraging such activity, I believe, that as in the events described in this chapter on some occasions at least, there is enough evidence to suggest that these incidents warrant further investigation.

UFOlogy is, on the whole, a fringe science, and thus largely the preserve of the keen amateur rather than of the accepted scientific institution. It mildly annoys me, therefore when 'amateur' writers adopt the status of 'officialdom' in a vain attempt to boost their own credibility. In many cases this tends to detract from what would otherwise be a sober and well thought out piece of research, such as this piece, which explains in some depth why both the crypto-zoologist and the UFO researcher should be interested in these attacks on domestic livestock.

Writing in *Operation Mutilation: The Official Report* Jon Elliston described the genesis of UFO related animal mutilation.

*"The origin of the mutilations saga is generally traced to September 1967, when a horse in Colorado by the name of Lady was found dead and missing suspicious amounts of*

*skin and other body tissues. In mutilations lore, Lady is known as "Snippy," a tongue-in-cheek reference to the animal's apparently chopped-up condition. The horse's owners said they believed there was a UFO connection, kicking off decades of allegations that aliens were to blame. The Snippy story achieved almost mythical status. Further reports of "mutes" occurred in the years that followed, and by the mid-1970s, there was a full-fledged epidemic underway, at least in terms of public attention focused on the issue. In several western states, rumours of evil agendas behind mutilations spread like a prairie fire.*

*The "classic mutilation," as it came to be called, usually involved the discovery of a cow corpse with some or all of the following characteristics: the absence of organs such as the tongue, the genitals, the anus and at least one eye, all of which had apparently been "surgically removed"; a body drained of all its blood; internal organs that had turned to a mushy consistency "like peanut butter"; and the presence of dead flies on the body."*

The affair of the dead whale, the UFOs, and the animal that was, in the words of both the eye-witness, and the late lamented Commander Woodruffe, (at the Grande Review of the Fleet at Spithead to celebrate the Coronation of George V), "all lit up" was not the only anomalous occurrence to take place in Lyme Bay during the September of 1997. In early October, the financial problems caused by full time UFO investigation and the imminent advent of a new baby forced Nigel back into Taxi Driving for a few weeks. One morning at about 10.00 he was driving a Trawler Captain from the docks to his home on the outskirts of Exmouth, when, to his surprise he heard another bizarre story.

Again, he reported it for his column in the *Exmouth Journal*:

*"Unfortunately no precise date can be given for the evening when a fishing boat encountered a strange light over Lyme Bay, but since this was told to me by the skipper of the vessel concerned I can vouch for its authenticity. The vessel in question was five miles off Budleigh Salterton. The crew became aware of a bright, white-blue light which hovered some distance from the boat. At first they thought that it was a helicopter but they heard no engine sounds, nor saw any navigation lights. . . ."*

The Captain told Nigel that it had been a bright, clear night, and that if the object, whatever it was, had, indeed made any sound, it would have been audible for miles. He also confirmed that his crew were experienced seamen who would have easily been able to recognise a helicopter if, indeed such a rare avis as a helicopter that could hover silently above the calm waters of Lyme Bay did indeed exist. Nigel's original report continued:

*"The light remained stationary for about one and a half hours. Judging by the mast of their vessel, which is twenty-eight feet high, the crew estimated that the light was not much higher than that."*

Nigel confirmed that the crew had used the mast as a reference point for confirmation of the elevation of the object and that their estimate of the altitude of the object is likely to have been largely correct!

Nigel's newspaper report concluded:

*"It then very suddenly disappeared".*

However, two years later we were to become involved in another, very similar case which, unlike the two recounted above, had a banal, if nasty explanation.

In March 1999 there were a number of UFO reports across south Devon. As we have always been staunch believers in the John Keel viewpoint of UFO reality (which expects a string of apparently disparate anomalous phenomena to occur at the same time as spates of UFO activity), we were not at all surprised to receive reports of a strange lion-like animal seen in the area and to hear of a series of mutilated dolphins being washed up along the shoreline.

Thanks to a helpful representative of Brixham Seawatch, a local cetacean conservation group we were able to examine the corpse of one of these creatures in situ, and for the first time we were able to perform a detailed autopsy. What we found was conclusive but it unfortunately seems to have nothing to do with either UFO phenomena or any other mystery.

Our findings were as follows:

1. Despite reports in certain areas, the head of the animal had not been removed with a single clear cut (reminiscent of a laser according to one source). The head had obviously been 'sawn' off by two or more strokes of a

serrated, cleaver type instrument. There were saw marks on the blubber and on the cervical vertebrae and the patterns of the cuts through the blood vessels to the head all confirmed this.

2. We removed the lungs. If the animal had either drowned there would have been sea water in the lungs. If the animal had been asphyxiated, for example, by staying under water with its blowhole closed, the capillaries in the lung itself would have burst and there would have been excess blood in the interior of the lungs. Despite the fact that the lungs were completely intact and undamaged there was no excess fluid inside.

3. There was, however, an excess of blood in the body cavity itself, which is consistent with the animal having been concussed.

4. On the tail of the animal, just below the tail flukes were marks of what appears to be nylon rope, probably from a net.

Our conclusions are that the unfortunate animal had swum into drift nets, probably placed illegally by Cornish Crab fishermen, and became entangled. Whilst still alive, the fishermen, unwilling to damage their nets, bashed the dolphin over the head with an oar to stun it, and sawed its head and some of its fins off, before throwing it back into the water.

## NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2003

7:00pm – 10:00pm

THE OLD  
QUEEN'S HEAD

POND STREET

SHEFFIED CITY CENTRE



UFOs:  
SUB ROSA\*  
 DOWN UNDER  
 THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY & GOVERNMENT  
 ROLE IN THE UFO CONTROVERSY (part 5)

BY BILL CHALKER  
 (Copyright © B. Chalker - 1996)

The author is a leading Australian UFO researcher and a contributing editor to the International UFO Reporter. An industrial chemist with an honours science degree from the University of New England he has worked in quality assurance and laboratory management. His book, *The OZ Files - the Australian UFO Story*, was published in 1996. He coordinates the NSW based UFO Investigation Centre (UFOIC).

Bill has allowed his work to be published in Project Red Book on numerous occasions, and it is now my pleasure to begin a major series on Bill's research into the secret investigations of the Australian government and military of UFOs.

Sub Rosa: refers to "under the rose", meaning "in secret".

### THE BOIANAI VISITANTS OF 1959

In 1959 Papua New Guinea was still a territory of Australia. June of that year saw the spectacular "entity" sightings of Reverend Gill and members of his Boianai mission.

As indicated by his notes made at the time and in numerous interviews, Rev. Gill saw a bright white light in the northwestern sky. It appeared to be approaching the mission. The object appeared to be hovering between three and four hundred feet up. Eventually 38 people, including Rev. Gill, Steven Gill Moi (a teacher), Ananias Rarata (a teacher) and Mrs. Nessie Moi, gathered to watch the main UFO, which looked like a large, disc-shaped object.

It was apparently solid and circular with a wide base and narrower upper deck. The object appeared to have 4 "legs" underneath it. There also appeared to be about 4 "panels" or "portholes" on the side of the object, which seemed to glow a little brighter than the rest. At a number of intervals the object produced a shaft of blue light, which shone upwards into the sky at an angle of about 45 degrees.

What looked like "men" came out of the object, onto what seemed to be a deck on top of the object. There were 4 men in all, occasionally 2, then one, then 3, then 4. The shaft of blue light and the "men" disappeared.

The object then moved through some clouds.

There were other UFO sightings during the night.

The major civilian groups of the day, in a spirit of new found cooperation inspired by the significance of the Boianai observations, distributed copies of Reverend Gill's own sighting report to all members of the House of Representatives of Australia's federal parliament. A circular letter accompanied the report, signed by the presidents of the participating civilian UFO groups, urging members of parliament to press the Minister for Air for a statement about the attitude Air Force Intelligence had of the New Guinea reports.

On November 24th, 1959, in federal parliament, Mr. E.D. Cash, a Liberal politician from Western Australia asked the Minister for Air, Mr. F.M. Osborne, whether his department (specifically Air Force Intelligence) had investigated "reports of recent sightings of mysterious objects in the skies over Papua and New Guinea." The Minister's reply did not address this question, but instead he focused on the general situation indicating that most sightings were explained and "that only a very small percentage -- something like 3 percent -- of reported sightings of flying objects cannot be explained".

Peter Norris, VFSRS president, was advised by the Directorate of Air Force Intelligence that the Department was awaiting "depth of evidence" on the New Guinea sightings. However the

department hadn't even interviewed Father Gill. Given the growing political fallout, the Minister for Defence requested a report on "the alleged sightings of UFOs in the Boianai area of NG by Rev. W.B. Gill." The RAAF finally visited Rev. Gill on December 29th, 1959.

Rev. Gill's recollections of the visit were that the 2 RAAF officers from Canberra talked about stars and planets and then left. He indicates that he heard no more from them. The interviewing officer, Squadron Leader F.A. Lang, A11 DAFI, concluded after what could have only been best described as a cursory investigation that:

"Although the Reverend Gill could be regarded as a reliable observer, it is felt that the June/July incidents could have been nothing more than natural phenomena coloured by past events and subconscious influences of UFO enthusiasts. During the period of the report the weather was cloudy and unsettled with light thunderstorm. Although it is not possible to draw firm conclusions,

an analysis of rough bearings and angles above the horizon does suggest that at least some of the lights observed were the planets Jupiter, Saturn and Mars. Light refraction, the changing position of the planet relative to the observer and cloud movement would give the impression of size and rapid movement. In addition varying cloud densities could account for the human shapes and their sudden appearance and disappearance".

A close analysis of the reports argues powerfully that the RAAF "explanation" of "either known planets seen through fast moving cloud, or natural phenomena" was unsatisfactory.

The Boianai "visitants" still stand as remarkable evidence for an impressive aerial anomaly and are regarded as some of the best entity reports on record.

*(Continued next issue)*

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## BEAST NUMBER TWO FOR CRAYFORD

(Wednesday 12th March 2003, <http://www.thisislocalondon.co.uk>)

A fully-grown puma is on the prowl in the Crayford area.

This was the conclusion of experts after paw prints measuring 4.5-by-4in were found at an allotment in Crayford.

The discovery follows numerous sightings of a big cat in the Bexley area.

Seven casts of the prints were made by Brad Clough, south eastern representative of the British Big Cat Society. These were then studied by Ellis Daw, founder-owner of Dartmoor Wildlife Park.

His verdict: "I am 90 per cent certain these are puma prints. They are rounded, with the right-shaped pads, and show no claw marks.

"Dogs cannot retract their claws, and big cats only use their claws when they pounce on a kill."

He said the animal is about two-foot high and three-foot long and has a fawn-coloured coat.

This is the strongest clue yet to the presence of a second big cat in the area. *News Shopper* has previously reported numerous sightings of a large black animal, dubbed the Beast of Bexley.

It was most recently caught on CCTV in a garden in Plumstead.

Mr Clough believes the puma may have been spotted in Bean, near Dartford, 18 months ago.

It travels long distances along railway lines.

Mr Clough said: "The Government should do something because in 10 years there might be a population explosion and we could see them coming into towns, like foxes."

If you have seen a big cat, call Brad Clough on 07812 787839 or visit [www.britishbigcats.com](http://www.britishbigcats.com)